

Remarks
Ambassador Lewis A. Lukens
Counterproliferation Awareness Training Session
December 3, 2012

Participants and Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning.

Thank you for inviting me here today to welcome you to the first Weapons of Mass Destruction training that the U.S. government has organized here in Dakar. The U.S. Embassy is a strong partner of Senegal on many security-related areas, and while “WMD” may be something we think is not a top concern here, it is undoubtedly a global threat. Senegal is a clear leader in the region -- effectively influencing global politics -- so we believe it is vital that Senegalese security professionals, like yourselves, understand WMD and counter-proliferation.

This training is through our International Counter-proliferation Program, a United States Government training program that is designed to build partnerships and assist international law enforcement, and customs and border security officials in countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials. The program’s mandate enables it to provide assistance to 87 countries in Africa, Europe, Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Again, we are so happy that Senegal is part of that group.

The training curriculum that you will follow will cover awareness of the WMD threat; WMD interdiction, investigations and response skills; and also how to build government interagency capacity to counter national threats and incidents.

We believe that like the United States, Senegal, too, wants to prevent the transit of WMD materials – as well as counter the smuggling of related illegal items. WMD counter-proliferation may not appear to warrant attention in Africa, but consider the following: Replace WMD with narcotics or small arms or human trafficking, and

the parallels are apparent. I believe that if you do that replacement of words, the issues resonate with each and every one of you in your daily jobs. So please take what you can from this important course – whether the new knowledge is something you may have to use sometime in the future or whether you can in fact apply it to your job here and now.

We have instructors here today from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and from our Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency; take advantage of their knowledge, expertise, and eagerness to work with you.

As you actively participate, do not hesitate to ask questions or register any concerns -- please share your knowledge and experiences with each other so that we can all learn.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your commitment to law enforcement and for taking the time to attend this important program. We are aware that you have many demands on your time. We hope that this course is one small step toward combating the global threat of WMD by strengthening the region of West Africa through enhanced knowledge and skills.

Thank you.